

A perswasive to Repen-
tance.

A
SERMON

PREACHED at

PHILADELPHIA, Anno 1739.

At the usual Evening-Lecture before the
Synod.

By SAMUEL BLAIR, *Minister of the Gospel*
of Christ.

Acts 20. 21. *Testifying both to the Jews and also*
to the Greeks, Repentance toward God, and Faith to-
ward our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

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A

Premonition to the Reader.

ALTHOUGH the saving Change of a Sinners Hearts, is the supernatural Work of God alone ; yet he brings it about in a way agreeable to their natural Practices, and Endowments as reasonable Beings ; and uses rational proper means with them for that End. Hence are all the Instructions, Motives, Arguments, and Expostulations, which are in the Scriptures ; which are not only for the Spiritual Progress of the renew'd and sanctified ; but also for the Conversion of the ungodly, and Sinners ; as may be abundantly seen throughout both Testaments. God in his Word, deals with Man, even in his Apostate unregenerate Condition, as an intelligent Creature, by all the Topicks of Argument and Rational Perswasion. Accordingly those whom Christ employs as his Ambassadors, in the Gospel-Ministry, are to labour not only for the Spiritual Good and Comfort of the Regenerate Children of God ; but also with the unrenew'd and unholy, for their saving Conversion, by all those rational Means wherewith God has furnish'd them in his Word. And 'tis as plainly both the Duty and Interest of Sinners (who' they cannot savingly Change themselves yet) to take up themselves, and as much as possible conform themselves to

God's declared Will ; and, in that Way, to seek incessantly for renewing Grace, and a saving vital Union with Jesus Christ. This is but to act as becomes rational Creatures in their Circumstances : 'Tis the Command of God, and the only Way of reasonable Hope.

Agreeably to these Things, I have in the following Discourse address'd the Reason, and considering Faculty of the Irreligious, in behalf of Religion, and their Souls eternal Interest : And shew'd from many Considerations, the unparell'd Unreasonableness and Brutishness, of Irreligion and Impenitence ; which might be sufficient to confound with Shame and deep Concern, especially such as highly Value themselves upon that truly valuable Endowment of the Human Nature, their Understanding and Reason, and yet live irreligious and ungodly Lives. As I hinted already I know Mankind are so far depraved and corrupted, that nothing but the Almighty Power of God, will be effectual throughly to change and reclaim them : But yet suitable and adapted means are to be used for that End, both by the Preacher, and the Sinner himself. And it is by, and in the use of these that God ordinarily Works this Effect.

I think such a Sermon as this is especially seasonable at this Time, when the *Moravians*, lately come to these Parts of the World, Teach, that Ministers are not to use such Methods with the ungodly ; and, that ungodly Sinners themselves, are not to use any endeavours this Way, in seeking to God for their Conversion and Salvation : From the specious Arguments

ments, that Salvation is not of Works, and that Christ needs not our help to convert us: As may be clearly seen in Count Zinzendorff's printed Discourses. This is to make Man like a brute or a block, rather than a Reasonable Creature; and fairly to lay the Reins on licentious Sinners Necks, and allow them to run where they Please. It is very true Salvation is not of Works, either by a Merit of Congruity or Condignity (as the *Romanists* Term and Distinguish it) so that Sinners ought not to set about reforming, with a View to appease God, or to excite his Love and Favour towards them, by any imagin'd excellency in their Works of Obedience, as I have carefully directed in the Close of the Sermon: And yet it is as true, that the utmost Efforts of unregenerate Sinners to observe the Divine Law, and seek the Mercy of God, and their Souls Salvation, is their indispensable Duty, their reasonable Service, and God's express Command; or else a great Part of the Bible is wrong, wherein they are enjoined to *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate, Luke 13. 24.* And, *all Men every where is commanded to repent, because God hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness. Acts 17. 30, 31.* with numberless other Places. If God requires the ungodly to turn from their irreligious Courses, to seek and endeavour to serve him; then they ought to do so: And that under the highest Pains, of his terrible and dread Displeasure. If God does not require it of them, then it is not their Sin not to do so; and consequently they are no Sinners, but doing Right enough; for where no Law is, there is no Transgression: And then consequently

quently again, they have no Hell nor Damnation to fear ; for where there is no Transgression, there is no Punishment, in a just Government. Thus you may see where this Doctrine leads. May the Lord preserve People from such a dangerous and fearfull Snare, which tends to delude them to their Destruction, and also, preserve them from resting upon means, and putting their own Righteousness in the place of Christ's Righteousness ; which is as fatal upon the other Hand.

Medita tutissimus ibis.

Resting upon means is inconsistent with, and a Bar in the way of believing in Christ ; but the use of means, as means, is not ; but is the express Command of God, and the Sinners Duty. It is ridiculous arguing here, that Christ needs not Sinners help to convert them : For, who ever imagin'd that they were to use means, with a View to help Christ to Convert them. But this is not a proper Place to pursue this Argument in its full Latitude. What I have already said may be sufficient here.

I know not of any thing in the following Discourse, that I am any way obliged to Account for, except it be the high Description I have given of the Repentance which may be attained to, by unregenerate Men. I wou'd have it observed, that I expressly include the ordinary Concurrence of the Holy Spirit : And how far the Spirit of God may concur, by way of common Operation, with the Endeavour of natural Men, I think we cannot Determine. I am satisfy'd that when the Holy Spirit

Spirit lays hold of Sinners with a Design of their saving Conversion, he frequently brings them to such a Degree of Repentance, even before the saving Change is wrought in their Hearts. I shall detain the Reader no longer from the Perusal of the Sermon: And may the Lord help you to peruse it to profit.

New-Londonderry,
April 1. 1743.

1073

JEREMIAH 8. 6.

*I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright :
No Man repented him of his wickedness, saying,
what have I done ? Every one turned to his Course,
as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.*

THESE Words are a part of a Prophecy or divine Message which begins with the foregoing Chapter, wherein the Lord by his Prophet calls us Sinfull, Rebellious and Apostate People, to Repentance and Amendment, to turn from their sinfull Courses and abominable Transgressions, to the obedience of his Laws, as may be seen in the 3d, 5th, and 6th, Verses of that Chapter. This the Lord presses upon them from two great Arguments, viz. *The Benefit they should enjoy upon their true Reformation, and the terrible judgment they should sustain upon their obstinate refusal and impenitency* Upon their thorough Retormation the Lord promises them a peaceable and prosperous Possession of their pleasant Land, v. 7. But upon their proceeding on still in their wicked Ways, he threatens them with the most dreadful Desolation, Death, and Captivity, generally throughout the Chapter.

This Argument the Lord farther Prosecutes in the beginning of this Chapter, shewing the extent of that *miser*y and *contempt* which he was about to bring upon them, and which in a little Time he did bring upon them by Nebuchadnezar's Army : And then in the 4th and 5th Verses he aggravates the *folly* and *madness*

of their obstinacy and bold Resolutions in persisting in their wickedness, by observing to them that it was folly unexampled, of which there are no parallel Instances to be found in any other cases. Thus saith the Lord, *shall they fall and not arise? shall he turn away and not return?* As if he had said, can any Persons so sottish and unwise be found, as will not rise up again, after they are fallen down upon the Ground? Can any such demented Person be found, who will not return to his right Road, after he has wandred out of it and gone wrong? surely no; common Prudence will teach Men better in such Cases. Why then, says he, is this People of *Jerusalem* slidn back by a perpetual back-sliding? O! unexampled madness! Tho' they have gone woefully out of the way, and are a wandring in their own ways, to their eternal Destruction, and have been over and over told of it from me, in the most moving and awful Terms; yet they presumptuously go on and turn not; their back-sliding is perpetual, they hold fast deceit and refuse to return. And this their continuance in a course of Sin and Disobedience, against all the warnings he had given them, and Pains which he had bestowed upon them, the Lord more fully and pathetically expresses in the Words of our Text, *I hearkned and heard but they speak not aright: No A an, &c.* In the Words you may Notice these few particulars. 1st, It is intimated that the Means which God had used with that People, were such as that a Reformation among them, might reasonably have been expected by them. This is implied in these Words, *I hearkned and heard*, in these Words are presuppos'd the means which God had previously used to them especially by the frequent

frequent Messages of his Word, in the Mouth of his Prophets: And so they signify how reasonably a thorough Reformation among them, might have been expected thereupon. *I hearkned and heard*, says the Lord *i. e.* as if he had said, having used such proper methods with them for their Repentance, which were sufficient to have influenced them thereto, then I hearkned and listned to hear if there were any discourse like Repentance among them, any talk that might give Hopes of their Amendment and Conversion, whether any were bewailing their past Impieties, and Transgression, saying, with Shame and Sorrow, alas what have I done!

The great God represents himself in a familiar condescending way, after the manner of Man, as expecting and hoping that the means which he had used with them, might possibly have had some good effect upon them, in their Reformation; and so he hearkned to hear what they were a saying about it. He carefully look'd and observed, whether there were any signs and appearances of their Repentance, after his Pains with them for that Purpose.

Yet these and all other such like Expressions, must be understood in a Way agreeable to the divine Perfections, so as not to infer those Weaknesses and Imperfections in God, which are in Creatures, and therefore not to be understood in the most strict and literal Sense of the Words. God's design in these Words, is only to signify, how reasonably a Reformation, and strong Endeavours after a true repentance, and the favour of God might have been expected of that People, in Consequence of such means as he had afforded them for that end; and

and consequently that their persisting after all in their old Courses, was a Guilt of a most aggravated nature ; and so here is one point of Doctrinal Truth which arises from the Text, viz. *That a Reformation in Sinners from their wicked ways and earnest Endeavours in seeking after the favour of God, might very reasonably be expected by means of the Messages of his Word sent to them for that End by the Mouth of his Servants and Ambassadors.*

Again, 2dly. We are told of the unsuccessfulness of all these Means, with that obstinate People : They had not that Influence and effect upon them, which it was very just to expect from rational Creatures, *I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright : No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done ? But every one turned to his own Course, notwithstanding the repeated Councils, moving Invitations, awfull Threats and Warnings sent to them under God's own tremendous Authority which ought to have excited them to Repentance, and fill'd them with the Language of humble Penitents, confessing with Shame and Confusion their by-past Follies and Impieties, expressing sincerely their Sorrow and self Abhorrence for them, saying, What have I done ? Yet alas, there was no such discourse to be heard among them, they spake not aright ; they spake not to this purpose ; I hearkned and heard, says the Lord, but they speake not aright : No Man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done ?* here you may observe what kind of Repentance it is which God requires of Sinners, under the hearing of his Word, faithfully deliver'd to them : A Repentance attended with an asham'd confession of their Sins and Iniquities ; that they acknowledge

knowledge what they have done, and that with deep regret of Soul, with confounding Shame and Indignation against themselves; as the Interrogatory form of the Expression requir'd of the true penitent, imports, *What have I done?* The penitent Sinner is represented as looking back upon his former way, freely confessing what they have been, and reflecting upon himself for them, with the saddest Grief and Sorrow; as a Person, who, thro' some Mismanagement, some bold or thoughtless Action has brought Disgrace and Misery upon himself, will, in his distress, sadly recoil upon himself, saying, *Who is me, what have I done? what have I done? by what I have done, I have undone myself.* Now, because there was no such thing to be heard or discerned among the People of Jerusalem, it was evident, that *no Man repented him of his Wickedness.* And so here is another point of Doctrine to be observ'd in the Text, viz, *That the Repentance which God requires of Sinners, upon his dealing with them by the solemn Messages of his Word, must be attended with Confession, deep Shame and Sorrow.*

3d. The Text declares how wilfully and brutishly resolute these People were in their wicked Courses. This is set out by the Similitude of a Horse, furiously running without thought or fear into the Battle: *Every one turned to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.* Perhaps they might give God a bodily hearing for an Hour or two sometimes, while his Servants declar'd to them his Messages, but that was all; as soon as that was over, then away every one immediately to his Course again without restraint, as the Horse to the Battle; as it is now lamentably among us.

This

This Comparifon implies in it thefe two things, 1^{ft}. The brutifh Unreasonablenefs, bold Prefumption, and Fool-Hardinefs of Sinners, who go on in their finful Courses againft all the awfull warnings of Heaven, and all the restraints of Reason and Confcience. Hence they are compar'd to a Head-ftrong ungovern'd Horfe in his Fury, that will be under no Control, but rushes madly on in the Face of *ten Thousand* Terrors. 2^{dly}, It implies the terrible Dangerousnefs of the Sinners Course. He is a going wilfully on to his own Ruin and Destruction, as the Horfe rushes into the Battle, into the midft of Dangers and of Deaths. And fo this Branch of the Text affords us thefe two Propositions of Truth more, 1^{ft}, That it is brutifh, irrational, and wilful for Sinners to go on ftill in their finful Courses, againft all the Instructions and folemn Warnings of God's Word. And 2^d. That Sinners going on in thefe Courses, are rushing upon the moft terrible Dangers and Miferies: *Every one turn'd to his Courfe, as the Horfe rusheth into the Battle.*

And now I fhall gather together the feveral Propositions of Truth, which I have taken Notice of from this Text, in the Explication of it, for our farther Confideration: And they are thefe four,

1^{ft}. That a Reformation in Sinners from their wicked Ways, and earneft Endeavours in seeking after the Favour of God, might very reafonably be expected, by means of the Meffages of his Word fent to them for that End, by the Mouth of his Servants and Ambaffadors.

2^{dly}.

2^{dly}, That the Repentance which God requires of Sinners, upon his dealing with them by the solemn Messages of his Word, must be attended with Confession, deep Shame and Sorrow.

3^{dly}, That it is brutish, irrational, and wilful for Sinners to go on still in their sinful Courses, against all the Instructions and solemn Warnings of God's Word. And

4^{thly}, That Sinners going on in these Courses, are rushing upon the most terrible Dangers and Miseries.

These are Truths clearly enough contain'd in this Verse. *I hearkned and heard, &c.*

I shall speak something to each of these propositions in their order. And

1st, I say a Reformation in Sinners, &c. I shall a little illustrate the Truth of this Doctrine, shew what we are to learn from it, and the use to be made of it in Practice, very briefly, and then pass to the next Proposition.

The Truth of this Proposition will clearly appear by considering and comparing one or two things. 1st. That Sinners are rational Creatures, and so ought to be influenced and wrought upon in matters of Practice, if they would not forfeit all claim to that Character, by rational Means, by powerful convincing Arguments and Considerations. If there is no dealing with mankind, and perswading them in this Method of rational Argument, they act no more like rational Beings than the brute

brute Beasts : To direct us in our Choice and Practice, is certainly the very greatest use and benefit of our understanding and Reason ; and therefore it might be justly expected from rational Creatures, in this Case as well as all others, that they shou'd be sway'd by Reasons, which they are capable to understand, according to the Weight and Importance of 'em ; otherwise, if they will not be Govern'd and acted from rational Considerations, but from sensual appetite, lust and blind wilfulness, they put off the Man and put on the Beast : Yea, much worse, they rather put on the Devil, acting against the light of Reason and Conscience, which Beasts do not, and so are the nearest resemblance to the diabolical Nature ; indeed a rational Creature, acting cross to the very confess'd Laws of Reason, and that in matters of infinite and eternal Moment, is the most unaccountable kind of being within the Compass of the whole universe. It could hardly be believ'd that there could possibly be such an irregular self-repugnant, oblique kind of thing in the whole System of being, did not sad Experience so undeniably confirm it : such a being would seem a sort of natural impossibility, and the very Mention of it, a direct Solacism.

And then 2dly, Consider, That the Messages of God's Word to Sinners for their Reformation and Repentance, are the most solemn, weighty, and powerful of any Thing that can possibly be propos'd to the Reason of Mankind.

He would be justly look'd upon as a most demented and brutish Man, who wou'd not be

be perswaded in other Cases by ten thousand Times less weighty Reasons than those which are propos'd and urged in the word of God for Sinners Repentance. The great God lays before Sinners in his Word the Reasonableness, Equity, and Excellency of Holiness; the just necessary Title and Sovereign claim which he has to their Obedience, both as he is a God of inconceivable Glory and infinite Perfections, worthy to be serv'd, honour'd and ador'd by all rational beings beside; and as they are his Creatures, created by him for that End, to glorify and serve him and enjoy the highest blessedness in him; and as he is their constant Preserver, the upholder of their Lives and giver of all their Benefits; upon all which Accounts they owe themselves entirely to him as his own Property, and the Subjects of his moral Government, by a most necessary and inalienable Right. He tells them of the unspeakable Happiness and Comfort which wou'd attend the hearty affectionate Choice and Practice of their Duty, and that eternal Glory with himself, which he will give to them who truly Repent and Love him. He tells them likewise what an immence, what an astonishing amazing Price was laid down to redeem lost Sinners from eternal Ruin, without which none cou'd possibly have been sav'd consistent with the exalted Dignity and Glory of his Majesty; how low the eternal Son of God condescended; how deep he was humbled; how cruelly he suffer'd, even Death it self in its most hidious Form: Yea, worse than *ten Thousand* Deaths; and all to purchase Salvation from the deepest Miseries to the highest Blessedness for guilty Rebels. O! What a surprizing melting Argument is here to ex-

cite Sinners to Repentance, to turn to the living God, with all their Hearts. O Sinners, will you, dare you trample under Foot the Blood of the Son of God! Disregard and under-value the dearest Love of the Father, Son and blessed Spirit! And go on in these Wickednesses, which cost a life that was worth *ten Thousand* Worlds to redeem you from them! Farther, the great God sets before them in his Word, the awful and dismal Scene of those eternal Pains, Miseries, and Horrors, which they shall infallibly endure for ever without Regeneration and Conversion. He tells you, O ye rebellious Sinners, that if ye do not Reform and Repent, seek his Mercy with humbled pained Hearts, and turn to his Ways, the Damnation of Hell, will infallibly be your Portion to all Eternity: That you are every Day in Danger of being cast into never never ending Anguish, Pain and Horrour for your continued Rebellion. Now, are not here Reasons for Sinners Repentance, turning from the Ways of Sin, and most earnest seeking the Favour and Mercy of God, of the greatest Weight Imaginable? And are not Sinners rational Creatures, to understand, consider and apply these Things: How reasonably, then might their compliance with them be expected. If the Consideration of these solemn Things will not work upon them, nothing else will. Luk. 16. 31. *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, i. e. the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God written by Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho' one rose from the Dead.* Surely if Sinners did but act ingenuously and rationally here, as they do for the most Part in other Cases, they wou'd immediately abandon their Lusts and wicked Ways, and betake themselves

themselves to the Ways of Religion with the most earnest Application, and most importunately and perseveringly cry for the Mercy and Pity of the great God, against whom they have rebel'd, seeking an Interest in his saving Love thro' Christ. O Sinners, these wou'd be the Effects of God's Word with you, if you did but act any Way agreeable to your noble Characters of reasonable Creatures.

Agreeable to what I have offer'd upon this Head, is that Passage which we have in the beginning of the 5th Chapter of *Isaiah*, the Lord there represents the Pains which he had taken with the People of *Israel*, and the Means he vouchsafed them under the Notion of the Provision which a careful industrious Husband Man, makes for the Fruitfulness of his Vineyard, and then signifies that it was but reasonable to expect good Fruit in Consequence of such Means, when he says, *he looked that it should bring forth Grapes; But* (O wonderful!) *it brought forth nothing but wild Grapes* after all; no other sort of Grapes than if it had been a wild Vine in the Forest, that never had been taken any care of. And then the Lord expressing the great Pains he had bestow'd upon this Vineyard, saying, *What cou'd have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it*, i. e. as to outward proper Means: He proposes the Question as it were with a kind of Wonder, *Wherefore when I look'd that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?* Wherefore brought it forth wild Grapes after such Means used with it? What a strange thing is this? Yes, strange it is indeed; other Things might well be look'd for.

Thus I think the Truth of this Doctrine is sufficiently evidenced: And now, to make some Improvement of it,

1st. If it be reasonable to look for the Reformation of Sinners, and their earnest Application to God for his pardoning Mercy, as the Effects of God's Word faithfully deliver'd to them: How inexpressible Heinous then is the Sin, and how awfully aggravated is the Guilt of such bold and daring Sinners, who after all go on in their old Practices? who Repent not of their wickedness, but turn still to their own Course again, *as the Horse rusheth into the Battle?* And yet alas, is not this the Deplorable case of Multitudes who are favour'd with the Word of God! O Sirs, are not the Reasons and Arguments of God's Word sufficient to persuade you every one to turn from his Iniquities, and to seek after God and your own eternal Salvation in earnest? Sure there is Reason enough in them to do so.

2^{dly}. This Doctrine informs us of the excellency of the Word of God: It contains Things of the utmost Moment and Consequence imaginable: It Treats of Things which are of infinite Importance to the Souls of Men; no less than Things which concern their everlasting States, either of unspeakable Happiness, or inexpressible Misery; such Things as have Reason and Weight enough in them to reclaim rebellious Sinners from their wicked Courses, and to excite them with the deepest concern to seek after God: *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho' one rose from the Dead.*

3^{dly},

3dly. Ungodly and irreligious Persons, as well as others, should hence be excited to esteem and reverence the Word of God. It is the Means which the great God uses with you for your Conversion and Salvation, *Pf. 19. 7. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple.* Your cursed Lusts, the wicked Inclinations and Dispositions of your un sanctified Hearts are like to be your eternal Ruin, and unless the Power of these Things is overcome, they will inevitably plunge you in a doleful Deluge of everlasting Misery and Woe; now, the Word of God faithfully preached to you contains such weighty and solemn Things, the due Consideration and Application whereof might well be effectual to break and overbalance the Prevalency of these Soul-destroying Evils in you, and awake you to seek after God and your Salvation in good earnest: And, O Sirs, if Things were once brought to this pass with you then there wou'd be some Hopes of your true Conversion to the Living God, and the Salvation of your Souls; And, O! how carefully ought you to improve that which has so great a Tendency to bring about your eternal Happiness, and Deliverance from endless and deserved Torments. Believe it Sirs, the Word of God is not like an insignificant useless Story which you may either hear or let alone to little Loss or Profit: *Is not my Word like as a Fire? saith the Lord, And like a Hammer which breaks the Rock in pieces? Jer. 23. 29.*

2dly. But I must proceed to consider the 2d. Proposition, which is, that the Repentance which God requires of Sinners, upon his dealing with them by the solemn Messages of his Word,

Word, must be attended with Confession, Shame, and Sorrow.

Here I shall a little farther open up and explain the Repentance intended in this Proposition, and my Design is not particularly to open up the nature of the saving Grace of Repentance, which is only in regenerate and sanctify'd Persons, and necessarily requires the supernatural Principles of Sanctifying Grace implanted in the Soul by the Holy Ghost, as the Foundation and Spring of it; but the Repentance which I design to speak to, and which I think is the Repentance intended in the Text, is that which Sinners thro' the Means and Advantages of God's Word faithfully deliver'd to them, may generally, by the ordinary Concurrence of God's Spirit perform, if they act so rationally and faithfully as they may and ought to do; which Repentance God requires them to perform as the Way of their seeking, and most hopeful Means for obtaining his pardoning Mercy and sanctifying Grace thro' Christ Jesus. It is, in short that Repentance which the Lord looks that Sinners should generally perform, such as are not judicially harden'd at least, to whom he has sent the Messages of his Word for that End, when he says, *I hearkened and heard to find whether any Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying what have I done.*

And in this Repentance two Things are to be considered: The Thing it self substantially and its Qualifications or necessary Adjuncts. And 1st. This Repentance strictly and substantially consider'd in it self is a turning from, and opposing of Sin, and an Application to the Duties

Duties of Religion, universally both in Heart and Life. A Sinner never practices any Thing like Repentance till he comes to this ; to forsake entirely his sinful Courses, withstand all Snares and Temptations to them, and wrestle against the inward Corruptions of his Heart ; to betake himself to the prescribed Ways of Religion, and most solemnly and earnestly to seek the Mercy and Favour of an offended and provoked God. Penitent *Ephraim* says, *What have I to do any more with Idols, Hos. 14. 8.* repenting *Israel* and *Judah* go and seek the Lord their God, going and weeping saying, *Come and let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten Jer. 50. 4, 5.* How dreadfully are they deceiv'd then who think that a few Checks of Conscience for their Sin after the Commission of it, and some slight Confessions of it before God is true Repentance, when yet they still go on in the same Practices ? Who think that their gallings of Conscience now and then, and their superficial Acknowledgments will secure them from all Danger, and make up for their continuing Wickednesses and neglect of the Ways of Godliness ? How dreadfully I say, are such poor Creatures deceiv'd in their Imaginations ? Especially seeing Persons may repent, even so far as I have described, without being in a saving State, and fitly qualify'd for eternal Glory.

2dly. As to the Qualifications of this Repentance, they are Confession, Shame and Sorrow. 1. Confession ; to repent with Confession of their Sin is what the Lord requires of Sinners who enjoy the Light of his Holy Word. This was his Complaint against the obstinate Jews in our Text, *No Man repented him of his Wickedness*

Wickedness, saying, what have I done? No Man among them repented acknowledging the horrible Sinfulness of his past Practice. It is not enough that Persons barely acknowledge the sinful Actions and Neglects that they have been guilty of; there is no doubt of their acknowledging them if they remember them; for it is not possible that they can deny these Things before God whatever they may do to Men; so far as their Memory serves them they can't but be self conscious of what they have done or not done; but they must acknowledge and be sensible of their Sinfulness and Wickedness in these Actions and Omissions. That the general Course of their Practice has been a Course of wicked Rebellion and Disobedience against God. While Sinners continue to justify their Practices, and tho' they will confess in general Terms that they are very sinful Creatures yet will hardly acknowledge it in any one particular Instance, or if some inward acknowledgments of their Sin in some or many particular Things be extorted from them by the Light of their Consciences, while they endeavour still to lessen the Sinfulness of these Things in their own View, to make it appear as very little and trivial, or always plead Excuses and make Apologies for themselves to their Consciences, I say, so long as it is thus with Sinners they are far far from Repentance. And yet, alas, thus it is with Multitudes of perishing Souls who are rotting in the Graves, in the Stench and Pollution of Sin; they are willingly blinded by the Devil to look upon their Sins as very Trifles: This is but a small Evil, and that is not much amiss, the Effect of human Frailty, and the other Thing is not so bad as many are guilty of, *I wish I may never do worse*

averse, I had no ill Design in it, or it was such a One's Fault as much, and more, than mine, and so it goes on. What base and contemptuous Notions have these Persons of the Great GOD, and his awful Authority, who think so lightly of their wilful and insolent Disobedience against him! O ye haughty and unhumbed Sinners, your Notes will be changed in a little Time; and unless ye repent quickly you shall feel the Weight of these Sins you foolishly thought so Light; in everlasting Miseries; Rom. 2. 9. Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. To you I would apply what the great God says to Sinners of a like Stamp. Jer. 2. 22, 23. Tho' thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much Soap, yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God. How canst thou say, I am not polluted? I have not gone after Baalim? See thy Way in the Valley, know what thou hast done.

2dly. Shame is another Ingredient in this Repentance: When a poor Sinner comes to see and solemnly consider Things as they are, the infinite Greatness and August Majesty of the eternal GOD, and the strong Bonds that are upon his Soul to live a Life of Holy Obedience to the Lord that made him; O! how unreasonable, heinous, loathsome, and vile does he then see his Sin to be! Especially considering how he has proceeded in it against so clear Light, tender Mercy, and awful Warning as he has had! Shame and Confusion covers him when he thinks of his irrational, bold, and insolent Course of Disobedience and Sin against God. Until Sinners are ashamed of their Sin before God, and their Souls blush within them, looking upon themselves as most

vile and brutish Creatures for what they have done, all their Repentance is little worth; shameless whorish Foreheads shall be struck down to Hell, *Jer* 8. 12. *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abominations? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore shall they fall among them that fall, in the Time of their Visitation they shall be cast down saith the Lord.*

3dly Another Qualification of this Repentance is deep Sorrow and Grief of Heart. O! Sirs, a repenting Sinner is humbled to the Dust, the Springs of his Grief are set open and many are the sorrowful Reflections of his Heart upon his past Practice, crying out, Oh! What have I done? Oh! What a miserable pass have I brought my self to by a Life of Sin? The Sorrows of his Heart gush forth when he considers what a Course of Life he has led, what a great and Sovereign God he has rebelliously disobey'd and provok'd to Wrath; when he takes a View of the sad and dismal Scene of Hell's Horrors which he sees he deserves to be cast into, O! then Sorrow and Anguish invades his trembling Heart, fearing lest these be his everlasting Portion. Before this, in the Time of his stupid Carelessness, he thought in his Haste, without any due Consideration, that there was no great Danger of his missing Salvation, *that God, sure, would not be so cruel as to damn such an one as he*; but now, when he comes seriously to consider Things and lay them to Heart, and takes a deliberate view of the Number and very heinous provoking Nature of his Sins, O! then his Tune is alter'd; he is afraid that the Holy and tremendous God will eternally reject him and cast him into Hell where he deserves to be: He sees it will be a wonder

awonder of Mercy indeed if ever such a Wretch as he be saved, if ever God pardon and glorify such a Rebel: Ah! it can hardly enter into his Heart, he is afraid he never will; and this fills his Heart with the deepest Sorrow for his Sins that have brought him into such deplorable Circumstances: *Wee is me, what have I done? What have I done?* Says the poor Penitent: What a mad distracted Creature have I been? Why, O! Why whretched Creature that I am, did I not consider these Things long ago, and not have thoughtlessly and boldly gone on in a Course of Sin rushing upon the dismal Precipice of the Damnation of Hell *as the Horse rushes into the Battle?* These Considerations fill the Sinner with Indignation against himself, so as to loath himself in his own Sight for his Abominations: These Thoughts excite him with the greatest earnestness to implore the Divine Mercy, and to dread the Commission of Sin as Hell itself. This Repentance the Great God very reasonably requires of Sinners *Joel 2. 12, 13. Therefore also now saith the Lord &c.* The Parable of the Prodigal Son, &c.

In the Beginning of the Discourse upon this Head of Doctrine, I signified that there was a Difference between this Repentance and that which is the Effect of sanctifying Grace which only is infallibly connected with Salvation; and here, before I dismifs this Head, I would just mention one or two of the Principal Differences, 1. In this Repentance the Person forsakes his Sin, and betakes himself to the Ways of Religion only from the Constraints and Awakenings of his Conscience: But in evangelical Repentance, when the Person has receiv'd the new Nature, he forsakes Sin and

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practices

practices Holiness out of Choice, freely, and affectionately, from a renew'd and sanctify'd Will. 2. In evangelical and saving Repentance the Terror and Dread of God's Wrath for Sin is chiefly taken away from the Conscience, by the Sinner's closure with Christ by Faith, and believing on him, but yet he hates Sin and grieves for it from another and more noble Principle, a Sense of its inherent Baseness, and a true Love to the blessed God which is shed abroad in his Heart, whence he is most affectionately inclined and engaged to please and honour him, and is sorrowful that he can no better serve him. Whenever Repentance comes to have these two Qualifications, then it's a blessed Evidence of the Person's being a regenerate Child of God, and in a saving State.

Now, this Repentance and Humiliation which I have been discoursing of, is necessary for Sinners to practice in order to their Regeneration, and the true Conversion of their Souls to God; in order to the Sanctification of their Hearts by the Holy Ghost, without which it is impossible for them to be sav'd; *For except a Man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God John 3. 5. And without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord Heb. 12. 14.*

And now, Sirs, to make some Application of this Head, I would propose to you this necessary and important Question, *have you ever thus repented?* Pray put the Question to your selves and answer to it in your own Consciences. Have not many of you gone on for a long Time in vain and sinful Practices, with a Neglect of God and serious Religion? Well then,

then, now I ask you, *have you ever thus repented* so as to be in the Way of Mercy? What say you to it Sirs? You see the absolute Necessity of it *Luke 13. 3. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Nothing that defileth or is unclean shall enter into the New-Jerusalem*; there is another Place for such, *The Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone: Without Holiness, no Man shall see the Lord*. Have you turn'd from your Ways of Sin and universally forsaken them and betaken yourselves to the constant Practice of Religion, according to the Direction and Command of God? Are there not some of you that have never done so yet unto this Day, but are still persisting in the same negligent rebellious Course? Let the Conscience of the guilty Person witness to his Face, and wound his harden'd Heart.

Again, have you turned from your Sins with free Confession of them before God? Acknowledging in yourselves that your Practices have been irreligious, ungodly, and vile? Have you been so sensible of your Sins as that you could put your Fingers as it were, upon your Sores, and cry, *unclean, unclean*? So sensible of them as to take the whole Guilt and shame of them upon yourselves? Ah! are there not some of you whose proud Hearts would never come to such an acknowledgment? But you have been always excusing yourselves and lessening your Sins, to still the Clamours and Accusations of your guilty Consciences: Tho' in general, you'll easily acknowledge you are Sinners, yet when it comes to Particulars, there is no Sin at all, or very little to be found: Some wretched brutish Plea or another you will always have to make your ungodly Practices appear to yourselves
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as very innocent Things, tho' you can't but know that you live contrary to the Law of God.

Farther, have you turned from your Sins, being deeply ashamed of them before God? Have you seen the base Brutishness and Unreasonableness, your Stupidity and boldness, in a Course of Sin and Irreligion, against the strongest Rights and justest Claims of Heaven, and all the Light and Warning which God has given you, so as to loath your selves in your own Sight for your Iniquities and Abominations? Have not some of you a Whore's forehead, that refuses to be ashamed? Nor being ashamed of the most Impudent manifest Transgression of the Laws of the great God: Nay, do not some rather Glory in their Shame? *i. e.* their Sin of which they ought to be ashamed: Some of you, perhaps, makes a boast of your Wickedness, your Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Quarrelling and the like; And don't you Pride yourselves in your Stoutness against all Admonitions and Councils to be Religious? In your making Light of the most awful Things that can be propos'd to your Consciences? This you think bespeaks a great and heroick Spirit: Let Children and the uncultivated Vulgar give way to the Impressions of such Things, but for your Parts you have a braver Mind. It must be confess'd it is pretty great indeed thus to swagger it out in the Face of Almightyness, and make Light of these Things at which the Devils Tremble. But O, you'll Tremble as fast as they by and by, unless ye Repent, your great Spirit will be brought down, when you shall be as dry Stubble before the consuming Flame, see Nab. i. 6. *Who can stand before his Indignation*

Indignation, &c. Eze. 22. 14. Can thine Hands be strong, &c.

In the last Place have you turned from your Sin with such deep Humiliation, Grief and Sorrow for it as I have described ? Have you turned from all your old sinful Courses with such a Sense of your miserable Circumstances thereby, your Danger of the eternal Damnation of Hell, as made your Hearts to ake and Bleed within you ? so that nothing cou'd yeild any Peace or Satisfaction to your distressed Souls, until you had a believing View of Jesus Christ the glorious Mediator, and some Apprehensions of having your Sins pardon'd, and being accepted of God in him, which Faith has been attended with a very sensible sanctifying Change and Alteration in your whole Souls ? Alas, are not many of you utter Strangers to this ? You have gone on several Years in the Way of Sin and rebellious Neglect of the Ways of Godliness, and yet have never so much as had your obstinate Hearts bow'd in true Humiliation before God on that Account ; but are still boldly persisting on in the same Course. O Sirs, consider what a deplorable Condition you are in, wherever you sit or stand in this Assembly, you have a whole Life of very aggravated Sin and Wickedness to answer and suffer for, you are under the dreadful and damning Guilt of all ; not one of all your numberless Sins is pardon'd or forgiven, and Death will Arrest your Souls by and by, and carry you into the invisible World of Spirits, where (unless you are before brought out of your present Condition) you will be cast into the Prison of Hell, and lash'd to the Wheel of Justice to suffer for all your Sin and Obstinacy against God, and slighting of the
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glorious Redeemer : There shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of Teeth to all Eternity. But perhaps you think you are pretty safe for all ; the Improvement of two or three Days of Sickness upon a dying Bed, will secure you for Eternity without all Doubt ! O ! blind and damning Delusion, God may then be as Deaf to you and all your Cries, as you have been for many Years to him. What Insolence and Haughtiness is this in vile sinful Miscreants ; to think that the Great and Sovereign God must be just at their Beck and Pleasure ! They for their Parts, have liberty to trample upon his Authority, abuse his Mercy, and fly in his Face all their Life, but he must be entirely at their Motion, and engaged to Pardon them ; and take them to himself for a few whining Confessions of their Sin, and cries for Mercy when they can go on in Sin no longer : O ! base unworthy Thought of God. It is to Day to Day, O Sinners *if ye will hear his Voice* *harden not your Hearts.*

But I pass on to speak a little and but a little, to the 3d. Observation, *viz.* That it is brutish, Irrational, and Wilful for Sinners to go on still in their sinful Courses, against all the Instructions and solemn Warnings of God's Word.

Indeed, to Sin against God, much more to continue to do so, in any Circumstances is a very brutish Thing, in as much as it is most Unreasonable : Obedience to the Sovereign God being most justly due from a rational Creature. The Latin Word for Sin, *Peccatum*, some suppose to be deriv'd from the Word *Pecus*, which in that Language signifies Cattle, because to

Sin is to act without any regard to the just Reason of Things, and so to act like a Beast.

But, how much more brutish and irrational is it for Persons to go on still in a Course of Sin and Rebellion against God, who are favour'd with the clearest Light and strongest Arguments of his Holy Word, most solemnly and repeatedly urged upon them : Arguments justly brought from all the Topicks of rational Persuasion, from the intrinsic Reasonableness, Beauty, and Excellence of Obedience to the great God ; and consequently the unreasonableness and unspeakable Baseness of Sin, from the endearing and tender Obligations of Goodness and Mercy, and so from that amiable Disposition of Gratitude and thankful Sense of undeserv'd Favour, and from the Topicks of immortal Happiness and Misery in the Life to come, both which are Unspeakable in their Duration and Degree. What will a brute Beast do more than Disregard all these Things ? and so do such impenitent Sinners. It is not to be admir'd that a Brute will not be moved by the strongest Reasons, because it has not a Capacity of understanding them : But what Account can be given for such Brutishness in rational Creatures ! Be astonish'd O Heavens !

The Truth of this Observation may sufficiently appear from what has been said already upon the first Head of Doctrine, for if a Reformation from Sin, and earnest Endeavours in seeking after the Favour and Mercy of God, may be reasonably expected of Sinners, to whom God has sent the Messages of his Word for that End, then certainly their Impenitency and Continuance in Sin after all is most

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unreasonable

Unreasonable, and consequently Brutish. Sinners persisting in a Course of Impiety and Irreligion after such Means, I'm well assur'd can never be the result of impartial Consideration, nor owing to the Conduct of Right Reason, but must be imputed to an irrational, brutish, impetus, viz. mere Wilfulness. They don't go on in such a Course because they can justify it upon a fair Trial to their own Consciences, much less to the Almighty God, but because they are inclin'd to it, and so WILL do it. You that Live in a Course of Sin and secure unconcernedness about your eternal States, I am well perswaded that the most plausible Defence which you can possibly offer for your selves will not be able to stand an impartial Trial, even yourselves being Judges; whence its manifest that you act wilfully and brutishly, *and turn to your Course just as the Horse Rushes into the Battle*. Consider but the Reasons which I have briefly mention'd under the first Proposition, which God offers you in his Word for your Repentance and earnest Application to him for his Mercy, and then Try if you can find any more weighty to oppose to them.

But farther, is it not irrational and brutish for Personsto be chiefly taken up about present Things, and little or nothing concern'd about the Condition in the Time to come? This is the very Case of impenitent Sinners; and I may Appeal to the World if this is not Acting like the most senseless and improvident Brutes in the whole Creation. O! How unreasonable and absur'd is this Practice and Disposition! especially, considering that in a little Time your Condition will be unalterably

bly fix'd for all Eternity, either in compleat Happiness or inexpressible Misery !

Again, Is it not most irrational and brutish to go on in the Face, of the clearest Warning and most awful Threatning, without Fear or Turning? This is likewise the Case of impenitent Sinners amongst us. How dreadful are the righteous Threatnings of the true and faithful God in his holy Oracles against impious Transgressors of his Law, neglectors of his Commands, and slights of his Authority and offer'd Mercy, and yet (bold Mortals !) they will not be deter'd : Yea, tho' the terrible Threats and Comminations of the great God, the sovereign Law-giver and ruler of the Universe, may be often denounced in their hearing, so that they might see the awful Armour of Heaven, as it were pointed at their very Breasts, yet they brutishly slight all these Things, and boldly Rush on in the same Course, *as the Horse rushes into the Battle.* An elegant Description of *the Horse's rushing to the Battle*, you may find, *Job 39.* from verse 21 to 26, particularly accommodated to the Custom of those ancient Times, when Battles were generally Fought by close Engagements, and so the two contended Armies violently rush'd upon each other. *He paweth in the Valey, and rejoyceth in his Strength : He goeth on to meet the armed Men : He mocketh at Fear, and is not affrighted ; neither turneth he back from the Sword : Tho' the Quiver rattleth against him, the glittering Spear and the Shield.* The most awful Things will neither Restrain nor terrify him, but on he will go. Just thus it is with impenitent bold Sinners : You are with a brutish Madnefs, rushing upon the spear Point of the divine Vengeance, and nothing will hold you Back. *The wicked Stretcheth out*

his Hand against God, and Strengtheneth himself against the Almighty : He runneth upon him, even upon his Neck, upon the thick Besses of his Bucklers, Job, 15. 25, 26. The Horte mocketh at Fear, i. e. he despises all the objects of Terrour, they shall not stop him : And ver. 25. Among the warious Trumpets, he saith, Ha, Ha ; Thus do Sinners contemn and make Light of the most awful Threatnings of the great Jehovah ; Leviathan like you Laugh at the shaking of the Spear : But O Sirs, you'll not Laugh so at the Stroke of it : When God comes to make his Sword red with Blood, and that with the Blood of the Slain, rendering Vengeance to his Enemies, and a Reward to them that hate him ; O, then you'll be convinc'd of your brutish folly to your eternal Shame and Horror.

Thus, I think the Truth of this Proposition is clearly manifest, and how little Cause then have obstinate Sinners, to Pride themselves of their great Wisdom ; or rather, what Cause have you to blush and be asham'd, when you think how you debase yourselves to the Level of the brute Creation, vilely disgracing the Excellency and Dignity of the human Soul. It is no shame for the Brutes to act as they do, because they act according to the Endowments of their Nature, and are not capable Subjects of moral Government : But sure it is a Shame for you to act like them especially in Things of the highest Moment and everlasting Concern. I am perswaded that many such Persons as I now Speak of, wou'd be sadly asham'd of acting irrationally in many other Things, of an infinitely lower Order ; and how comes it then that you think it no Disgrace to Conduct yourselves like the unreasonable Creatures

tures in the Things of God and your own eternal Interest? Wherein you pay no Regard to the strongest Reasons imaginable. Alas, a Course of Sin and neglect of practical Religion, is become so general that this takes away the Ignominy and Shame of it in the Eyes of the brutish World.

But the chief Inference I wou'd deduce from this Doctrine is this, It informs us that such presumptuous wilful Sinners must expect to meet with an awfully aggravated Damnation in the next World, unless ye Repent in Earnest, and God extend undeserv'd Mercy to you and renew your unsanctify'd Souls, and fit them for his heavenly Glory, it will be more tollerably in the Day of God for *Sodom* and *Gommorrah*, (the Cities which the Lord destroy'd in his Anger for the most unnatural Wickedness) *than for you*, *Matt. 11. 20, 24*. Your Impiety and Impenitency is of a more heinous and aggravated Nature, than that of the Pagan World, who have never had the high Advantages which you are favoured with, and therefore your Torment will be greater, in Proportion to your Crime. This Circumstance of Sins being committed and continued in against the clear Light and Warning of God's Word has a twofold Influence upon the increasing of Sinners Punishment in Hell, viz. Physical and Moral. First, it will have a Physical Influence upon it: The Misery of such Sinners will of necessity be greater than of others from the very Nature of Things; for one Part of the Misery of the Damned, consists in the cutting and terrible Reflections of their Consciences upon themselves for the folly and madness which they have been guilty

guilty of in their past life in this World, for which they now suffer; but such Gospel Sinners will have a far higher Degree of brutish wilfulness and affronted Boldness, against God to charge themselves with; and therefore their Remorse of this kind will naturally of necessity, be more Deep and Peircing the Worm that never Dies, an accusing tormenting Conscience, will gnaw more sharply upon their Hearts.

Secondly, A continuance in a Course of Sin after all the Councils and Arguments of the Word of God that are used with Sinners; will have a moral Influence upon the heightning of their Damnation; in as much as thereby they are render'd more heinous Sinners; as you have seen made Evident: The higher Advantages Persons enjoy for living a Religious Life, the more thoroughly and solemnly Sinners are dealt by the Messages of God's Word, the more criminal is their Impenitency: The Heinous base qualities of their Sins, such as brutish wilfulness, contempt of God, &c. are much more aggravated, so that they deserve a greater Punishment; and justice will undoubtedly distinguish the Degrees of Punishment, according to the Degrees of Merit. O thou wilful and incorrigible Sinner, consider what a terrible aggravated Damnation thou deservest and art like to meet with in a little Time, for thy brutishness, and heaven daring Insolence, in paying no Regard to all the Councils, Arguments, and Threatnings of the eternal God. O consider, and Tremble at the Thought; humble thy obstinate and rebellious Heart in Time before the God that made thee, before he Tear thee in Pieces when there shall be none to deliver; *and be not* (any longer

longer) like the Foole or the Mule which have no Understanding, Psal. 32. 9. And you who think that your Sin is so small and trivial, consider these Things and see your blind Mistake.

But I hasten to the 4th and last Proposition, which is, that Sinners going on in their sinful Courses, are rushing upon the most terrible Dangers and Miseries. And if nothing that has hitherto been spoken will move such Persons, O that what may yet be offer'd upon this Head, might awaken them to Repentance, and seeking after God that they may be saved.

Upon this Head I shall speak very briefly to these two Things, and so conclude, 1st. I shall show you some of these sinful Courses which lead Sinners to such terrible Miseries. And,

2dly, What those Dangers and Miseries are, which Sinners in these Courses are Rushing upon.

As to the former of these : In the first Place, a Course of more gross and prophane Sining leads Souls to most awful and eternal Miseries : Such as swearing, lying, taking the sacred and venerable Name of God lightly and in vain, Drunkenness, Quarelling, Whoredom, profane Sabbath-breaking, Stealing, Defrauding, Revengeing, mocking and scoffing at Piety and Religion, and all such enormous Wickedness : All Persons who go on in these, or any of these, Practices are posting directly and speedily to eternal Destruction ; bound in straight Course for Hell.

2dly. Another Course of destructive sinning, is a Course of licentious Merriment, Jollity, and sensual Pleasure. This is directly contrary to that Sobriety and holy Fear of God which is inseparable from true Christianity: And I would ask such as are addicted to this Course of Life, whether you can possibly think that this is *being holy in all manner of Conversation*, according to 1 Pet. 1. 15. Whether you can imagine that this is *that Holiness without which no Man shall see the Lord* You can't but know in your own Consciences that it is not, if you would allow yourselves to think impartially and deliberately: Is it not rather a casting off all due Fear of the Divine Majesty; and living without God in the World? O! Sirs, the End of all Things is at Hand: *Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer. The Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and the Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts; but they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the Operation of his Hands; therefore Hell hath enlarged her Self, and opened her Mouth without Measure, and their Glory and their Multitude, and their Pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it.* Isa. 5. 12, 14.

3dly. An habitual Neglect and Omission of the positive Duties of Religion, is another Course of Life wherein Sinners are hastening to their own Ruin. All prayerless Persons, such as bear not a religious Regard to God's Holy-Day, and do not attend upon his instituted Worship and Ordinances in order to serve him stand chargeable with high Disobedience and Rebellion against God, in the Neglect of his Appointments, and contempt of his Authority. Is not the Sovereign Authority of God the great Law giver as much condemned and trampled

trampled upon in not performing what he enjoins as in committing what he forbids? It is the same adorable authority that is slighted and disobeyed in both Cases. Hear your doom, ye Neglecters and Slighters of Religion, *the Lord Jesus will be reveal'd from Heaven in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance upon all them that obey not his Gospel* 2 Thes. 1. 8.

4thly A Course of covetous Worldliness; Which is an idolatrous preferring of the Creature before God, and setting it up in his Room. Hence says the Apostle, *Eph. 5. 5. No covetous Man who is an Idolater hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.*

5thly. In the last Place: A Course of stupid Security, groundless Peace, and unconcernedness about their eternal Condition is another Course wherein Sinners are going on to their Destruction. By Persons living in such fatal Security and unconcernedness, I mean all such, of whatsoever Character and Conversation they may otherwise be, who have not the sanctifying Graces of God's Spirit in their Souls, who have not the Disposition of true Holiness implanted in their Hearts by Regeneration, but have the natural Aversion of their Wills to God still abiding and prevailing in them, and yet are stupidly insensible of their sinful and dangerous Estate, of the deplorable Condition they are in, little distress'd or concern'd about it, not earnestly seeking after God for his renewing sanctifying Grace and a state of Favour with him. These Persons, tho' they may be pretty moral for the most part in their Practices and likewise have an outward Form and Appearance of Religion; yet, their Souls are utterly unhol-

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ly and vile in the Sight of God : They have never laid hold on Jesus Christ and embraced him by a true and living Faith for their Salvation and so slight the glorious Mediator and cross the Design of the whole Gospel ; they do not truly love God above all Things and most affectionately desire to please and serve him, making it the great Design of their Lives, from a Sense of their Obligations and a Principle of Love, to live to his Honour and Glory ; and thus the very Temper and Disposition of their Souls is directly contrary to God and Holiness : And while they are going on in this unsanctify'd Condition with secure Consciences and whole unconcerned Hearts as if all were well with them, they are heedlessly and very irrationally going on to their eternal Ruin : And, alas, this deep sleep, unreasonable damning Security and unconcernedness (as it may be justly term'd) very generally prevails among Mankind : They are so taken up about other Concerns (and many of them very trifling of no Moment even as to the present Life) that they don't take time thoroughly to consider and examine the State of their Souls in Relation to the future World : But, as if that were a Matter of no importance, readily take it for granted that they must be in a safe Condition without ever duly enquiring, by the Rule of God's Word and unbyass'd Reason, whether they have the Qualifications necessary for the Heavenly State ; and so enjoy a very unreasonable Peace and Quiet in their Minds against the plainest Evidence. These are briefly some of the sinful Courses wherein Persons are going on to their own Ruin and Destruction, and that against all rational Means that can possibly be used with them, even as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.
But, ally,

2dly. What are the Dangers and Miseries which in these Courses they are rushing into? In a Word, they lye open and exposed at all times to all those Plagues and Evils which God at any Time inflicts upon his Enemies either in this Life or that which is to come: And if they are not punish'd with such severe Strokes of Justice in this Life, it is not owing to the Goodness or safety of their State, or any Security which they have against it, but merely to the free and gracious Forbearance of God, whereby for a Time he defers the Strokes of his Wrath; *for God is angry with the Wicked every Day, Ps. 7, 11.* And however they may prosper in this Life there is a solemn Time of Accounts and Payments hastning on. But, more particularly, there are two or three Dangers and Miseries I would briefly mention, which such resolute Sinners are apparently rushing upon. 1. Being judicially given up of God to hardness of Heart, searedness of Conscience, and so to their own Lusts without the least Restraint. Thus God dealt with the Heathen World for abusing the smaller Light of Reason, as the Apostle informs us *Rom. 1. Therefore God gave them up to Uncleanness, thro' the Lusts of their own Hearts, v. 24. For this Cause God gave them up unto vile Affections, v. 26. And even as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind, to do those Things which are not convenient, being fill'd with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness &c. v. 28. and downwards.* Thus he dealt with the People of Israel *Ps. 81. 11, 12. but my People would not hearken to my Voice, and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up to their own Hearts Lusts, and they walked in their own Council.* This is the Condition which Gospel-Sinners are like to

come into; and is it not an awfully dangerous one? All Hope of their Conversion and Salvation is then almost quite gone. *Woe unto them when God departs from them* *Eos. 9. 12.* 2. An utter and dreadful despair of Mercy even in this Life is a Misery which such Sinners are in Danger of. The Lord some times in this manner gives some Foretastes of Hell upon this Earth to such as have thus gone on in Sin against all Light and Convictions, for a Warning and Terror to others. *Cain, Judas, and, in later Times, Francis Spira, John Child* and others have been awful Instances of this. For all so stupid, and stout against God as Sinners are now, he may pass the Sentence of their eternal Damnation in their own Bosoms yet before they die, and cause them to feel something of the Desperation and Horror of the Damned World. A wilful persisting in the Ways of Sin against all the Light and Warning of the Word of God is the ready Way to this Misery.

3^{dly}. In the last Place, such obstinate wilful Sinners are rushing into an awfully aggravated Damnation in the next World. Their Pain and Torment thro' all Eternity will be more intollerable than that of others, as has been made appear upon the foregoing Proposition. O! Sinners, without a saving Conversion to God this will be your dreadful Portion in a little Time: And can you think of this without a trembling Heart, without any Concern or Distress; you know not how soon Death may put an End to the Day of Life, and that will be an End to all possible Hope; then you are irretrievably gone for ever if you are taken away in this impenitent State: You stand as it were upon the very Brink of the burning Furnace

nace, and how soon you may be cast in and sealed up to Eternity in the dismal Vault of Hell you know not; is it not then of the last Necessity to try to escape for your Lives while there is any Hope, before your Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains, and you fall into the Gulf of irreparable Ruin. O Is there no irreligious Christless Person in this Assembly that is ready by this Time to cry out with the trembling Jaylor, *What shall I do to be saved?* I am now come to the Conclusion of this Discourse, and what more shall I say to perswade obstinate perishing Sinners to awake out of their unreasonable Security and seek after God in good earnest that they may escape the Wrath to come; I have shown you the Nature of that Repentance which you ought to set about with the utmost Application, in seeking to God for your Souls Salvation; I have shown you some of the strong and weighty Reasons and Arguments which the Great God urges upon you in his Word to perswade you to it; the unreasonable horrid Brutishness and wilful Obstinacy of your disregarding them and going on still in your old Courses; and the most awful terrible Dangers and Miseries which you are thereby rushing yourselves into; and, O Sirs, will none of these Things move you! What a make are you of! Will nothing that can be said to you perswade you from Death and Ruin! Or, so much as to seek after your everlasting Happiness! Are you so intoxicated with a love to Sin and disobeying God from whom you had your being and still have all your Benefits, and who alone must be your Happiness, that the everlasting Interest of your immortal Souls will not overballance it! Are you
 resolv'd

resolv'd upon your own eternal Destruction?
 To sell your deathless Souls to eternal Pains
 for a thing of nought? If any of you are
 brought to a Sense of your miserable perishing
 Condition by a Life of Sin, and hearty Reso-
 lution to seek for Relief out of it, let me
 direct and beseech you not to suffer these Im-
 pressions to wear off and die away without
 saving Effects; but endeavour to apply these
 Things still closely to your Hearts; take
 the eternal Concerns of your Souls into Solemn
 Consideration, and abstain from all your for-
 mer Courses of Sin and Negligence; cry, O
 cry earnestly and often to the Great God for
 his pardoning Mercy in Christ, and renewing
 Grace that you may be entituled to and pre-
 pared for his glorious Kingdom. And one
 Thing I would have you very particularly to
 take Notice of, *viz.* To consider in all your
 Applications to God for your Salvation that
 if ever you are saved and received to Mercy
 it must be thro' the Merits and Mediation
 of Jesus Christ alone and nothing else. If
 you lay your Dependance and Hope for Par-
 don and Acceptance with God upon your Re-
 forming, Praying, and Repentance, yeu will
 eternally miss of it: For this is acting con-
 trary to the very Design of the Gospel, and
 new Covenant-Way of Salvation. You are
 to observe and Practice these Things as the
 Means which God requires you to use to seek
 his Mercy and your own Salvation by: But
 if guilty Sinners hope by these Things, by
 their own filthy Rags, and impure Righteous-
 ness to encline the Love and Favour of God
 towards them, they may expect he will frown
 them into Hell for their Impudence: He has
 established

established another Method for their Relief which is more agreeable to his Wisdom, better suited to the glorious Dignity and Perfections of his Nature, and requires that they comply with it, humbly and thankfully embrace their Salvation in that Way in which he is willing to give it. If ever God have Mercy upon you and be reconciled to you it will be for the perfect and pure Righteousness of his own Son alone: The Merit and Righteousness, the Obedience and Sufferings of Jesus Christ must be accepted for you; there is no other possible Way for your Salvation *John 14. 6. Acts 4. 12. Rom. 3. 24, 25.* with many other Scriptures. And if ever you have a Share and Interest in his Righteousness and Mediation, and are brought into a State of Justification and Peace with God by it, you must close with him by Faith, reject all Trust and Confidence in any Thing else, fly to him alone for your Relief, lay the whole Weight of your Salvation upon his Merit and Mediation, and so take him with all your Heart for your only Saviour. And whosoever do so come to Christ shall never be confounded; his faithful Word is engaged for it: And therefore, O beg of God that he would give you true Faith to embrace the Redeemer, & enable you to receive and close with him in a right Manner. And know that there is a blessed and glorious Change wrought in a Sinners Heart, when by Faith he closes with Christ, as to the Actings and Dispositions of it towards God; which likewise produces an answerable Alteration in the outward Practice and Deportment. O ye secure impenitent Sinners awake awake out of your deep and deadly Sleep, out of your delusive Dreams, before the burning
Flames

Flames of Tophet kindle upon you and bring
 you to your Senses, and fly to Christ that
 you may be saved. *May the Lord bless these Things*
to our everlasting Benefit.

F I N I S.

